

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL MEETING
WITH MEMBERS OF THE RECREATION COMMISSION
HUTCHINS STREET SQUARE ~ COTTAGE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2001**

A. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The April 25, 2001 Special Joint City Council meeting with members of the Recreation Commission was called to order by Mayor Nakanishi at 5:45 p.m.

Present: Council Members – Howard, Land, Pennino (arrived at 6:20 p.m.) and Mayor Nakanishi

Absent: Council Members – Hitchcock

Present: Recreation Commissioners – Ken Sasaki, Bob Johnson, and Ed Wall, Jr.

Absent: Recreation Commissioners – Victor Schuh and Scott Davis

Also Present: City Manager Flynn, Deputy City Attorney Schwabauer, and City Clerk Blackston

B. TOPIC(S)

“Discussion of items of mutual concern”

City Manager Flynn reviewed the following steps related to Capital Improvement Projects:

1. Designated: Set aside funding for future project development under “pay as you go” financing.
2. Study: Includes concept design, site selection, feasibility analysis, schematic design, environmental determination, property appraisals, scheduling, grant application, grant approval, and specification preparation for equipment purchases.
3. Acquisition: Includes equipment purchases and property acquisition for projects, if necessary.
4. Design: Includes final design, plan and specification preparation, and construction cost estimation.
5. Construction: Includes bid administration, construction, project inspection and management, and closeout.
6. Debt Service: Installment payments of principal and interest for completed projects funded through debt financing.

Parks and Recreation Director Baltz reported on the Department’s recent accomplishments and current projects. A recent newspaper insert entitled “Community Activities” outlined the many recreational activities and programs that are scheduled. A new program for youth water polo has been initiated. Staff recently met with Lodi Unified School District (LUSD) representatives to look at the feasibility of beginning an after school program at Washington Elementary School. They are also working toward minor modifications to the Joint Use Agreement between the City and LUSD. Staff has been working toward acquiring three properties in preparation for a 32,000 square foot indoor sports facility, and on improvements to the beach area of Lodi Lake. Construction of the new Katzakian Park is also underway. A new Parks Superintendent, Steve Dutra, was recently hired. Mr. Dutra is a certified arborist and pesticide technician, and is qualified to inspect playground equipment.

Mayor Pro Tempore Pennino stated that for all dedication ceremonies (e.g. Katzakian Park) staff should make an extra effort toward coordination of the events and getting notices out to the community.

Mr. Baltz continued his report, stating that staff has been working on preliminary steps toward the BMX Park, as well as the Skate Board Park at Kofu Park. They anticipate providing a report to Council regarding the Skate Board Park on May 16, 2001. They have also been working with representatives of the Armory facility to gain access for use of common areas. The Swimming Pool Task Force has been meeting to discuss the swimming facility needs of the community and are currently working on an RFP (request for proposal) for the concept design.

In reference to project funding, Mr. Baltz reported that \$1 million has been collected in Development Impact Fees. Proposition 12 per capita grant money may result in \$671,000 for the City. He noted that the Department will also be applying for competitive grants whenever possible.

City Manager Flynn added that a "brainstorming" session with a financial advisor and an underwriter will soon be taking place to discuss project funding options. He stated that interest rates are very favorable at this time and debt financing may be a viable alternative. Staff will report to Council this summer on finance strategy recommendations to fund the following proposed projects: 1) Indoor Sports Facility; 2) Aquatics Center; 3) Animal Shelter; and 4) DeBenedetti Park.

Mr. Baltz estimated the Indoor Sports Facility will cost \$5–7 million; the Aquatics Center \$2.5–3.5 million; and DeBenedetti Park \$2.8 million, in addition to \$4.7 million for the drainage aspect.

Commissioner Ken Sasaki recalled that the original estimate for the Indoor Sports Facility was \$7–10 million and questioned why the amount has been decreased.

Mr. Baltz replied that up until this point there has not been an initial plan or meaningful estimate for the Indoor Sports Facility. He has surveyed several communities that have an indoor sports facility and found that the range varies from \$130 to \$270 per square foot. Mr. Baltz determined that a 30,000 square foot facility is needed, as the basketball courts alone will need 25,000 square feet of space.

Commissioner Ed Wall, Jr., asked whether Community Development Block Grant funds could be obtained for partial funding of the Indoor Sports Facility.

Mr. Flynn replied in the affirmative, and noted that in addition, the City can consider possible funding through the Redevelopment Agency, impact fees, general fund revenues, grant funds, and private contributions.

Mr. Baltz reported that the Lodi Sports Foundation has expressed interest in getting involved in fund raising and are now working on building grass roots support.

Mr. Flynn commented that individuals and businesses outside the city boundaries (e.g. farming and rural communities) often contribute toward recreation projects and programs.

Mr. Sasaki reported that he is working with individuals interested in painting a mural in the Indoor Sports Facility.

Mayor Nakanishi felt that fund raising would be more successful if a definable goal was established, such as a percentage of the total cost of the project.

Mr. Baltz replied that the Lodi Sports Foundation does not have the means to raise a significant percentage of the cost for the Indoor Sports Facility, and he indicated that the Council may wish to consider a Certificate of Participation (COP).

Mayor Pro Tempore Pennino suggested that the Mayor and one Council Member meet with the Lodi Sports Foundation to discuss fund raising efforts.

Commissioner Bob Johnson disagreed with the intimation that the Indoor Sports Facility should be compared to, or funded, similarly to Hutchins Street Square. He affirmed that the BOBS organization has been working diligently and raising funds toward parks and recreation programs for 40 years, and suggested that the City should not obligate them, or other sports organizations, to pay a certain percentage of the cost to build these facilities.

Mayor Pro Tempore Pennino spoke in favor of preparing drawings and scale models of the proposed projects to use in soliciting public input, support, and investment.

Mr. Wall, Jr., reported that the Recreation Commission held several successful public meetings in which these projects were discussed and public support was established. He urged the Council to move forward in an expeditious manner on the construction of these projects.

Mayor Nakanishi agreed that action needs to be taken to move these projects forward; however, he suggested to first conduct a public survey to determine the support of the community.

Council Member Howard disagreed with conducting a survey, noting that the community has already made it clear that they support these projects. She emphasized the need to prepare drawings so that design proposals can be taken out into the community. Ms. Howard identified her top three priorities as being the Aquatics Center, Indoor Sports Facility, and Animal Shelter.

Mr. Flynn approached the idea of a tax increase as a means of funding the projects. Mr. Pennino stated that he was adamantly opposed to the idea, as it may deter the proposed school bond.

Council Member Land commented that a survey has already been conducted by a private business and the results indicate that these four projects are considered high priorities by the community.

Mayor Pro Tempore Pennino stated that the City has enough money for the design phase. If action is taken soon to start the design process, these projects could be brought to the public for consideration in May or June 2002.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that by May/June 2002 the results of the school bond proposal will be known, so the Council could then consider a sales tax increase dedicated to funding these projects. Mr. Johnson stated that he believed there is public support for a sales tax increase. He expressed concern about Mr. Flynn's earlier comment that Development Impact Fees are "pooled", as he felt that this might result in the money being spent on matters unrelated to parks and recreation projects.

Mr. Flynn explained that pooled Development Impact Fees are designated between general government facilities and parks and recreation facilities. The question remains as to whether to spend the fees as they are collected, or wait until the full stipulated amount is collected. He pointed out that a COP would be paid by sales tax revenue. Mr. Flynn commented that his biggest concern is funding the operational costs of these proposed facilities.

Mr. Baltz interjected that planning and design is now underway for the Lodi Lake Phase II, Pedestrian and Bike Trail project, which would include improvements to the park's south central area. He noted that meetings between staff and the Friends of Lodi Lake have taken place to discuss development of the lake's 13 acres on the west side.

RECREATION COMMISSION COMMENTS

- Commissioner Ken Sasaki stated that he would like to schedule a tour of the City's parks with the City Council and Commission members. He felt that the City should focus on increasing programs targeted to teenagers. He asked whether the County might contribute funds toward the proposed projects.
- Commissioner Wall, Jr., commented that Parks and Recreation Director Roger Baltz has been excellent to work with and is supportive and knowledgeable. He urged the Council to consider every possible funding mechanism and suggested that a funding survey might be worthwhile to get input on the public's preference for payment of these projects.
- In reference to the Aquatics Center, Commissioner Johnson expressed concern about the expression of a "regional concept". He acknowledged the need for an Aquatics Center and stated that careful consideration should be given to the necessity of an "Olympic size" pool before finalizing plans for this facility, especially given the enormity of the costs involved in all of the proposed projects.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Council Member Howard reiterated her desire to move forward on the design phase and bring a tangible plan to the community on the proposed projects. In response to the pool size consideration, Ms. Howard stated that the City is in need of a 50-meter pool for competitive sporting activities. She suggested that a walkway be constructed from the downtown parking structure to the Indoor Sports Facility, as a means of addressing pedestrian safety issues related to the close proximity to the railroad tracks.
- Council Member Land stated that the Town Hall meeting on the subject of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) clearly indicated that there was support and collaboration of all interested parties toward the proposed projects. In response to Mr. Johnson's concern about the size of the swimming pool, Council Member Land agreed that different options should be addressed and considered. He emphasized the need to place lighted signage at DeBenedetti Park before the outlying residential area develops. He stated that he is not in support of a tax increase as a project funding option at this time. Citizens have brought to his attention that dogs are walked off their leashes at Peterson Park and there are sanitary issues that need to be addressed. Perhaps signs should be posted reminding owners of their responsibility to clean up after their pets. In response to Mr. Sasaki's request to schedule a park tour, Council Member Land suggested June or July.

Mr. Johnson recommended identifying DeBenedetti Park as the site of a lighted sports complex on subdivision maps, so that potential residents of the area are aware of the impact.

- Mayor Pro Tempore Pennino agreed that the Town Hall meeting was very successful and indicated consensus by the public on the proposed projects. He reiterated the need to move forward on the design phase, and expressed support for a 50-meter, 9- to 12-lane swimming pool. In reference to a tax increase, Mr. Pennino again stated that he was opposed and does not believe that it would get a 2/3 vote as required by law, particularly if it were to be placed on the ballot with the proposed school bond. He stated that the Recreation Commission should not be discussing a tax increase with the public as a potential funding mechanism for these projects unless directed to do so by the City Council. He expressed support for a teen center, deepening Lodi Lake and completing the development of the 13 acres on the west side.
- Mayor Nakanishi agreed with moving forward on the concept design of the projects and also stated that he was opposed to a tax increase.

Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of locating the swimming pool at DeBenedetti Park. Issues raised included the benefit of better traffic flow to the area, and the drawback of displacing needed sport fields.

In response to Council Member Land, Deputy City Manager Janet Keeter reported that ProStyle Sports anticipates distributing an administrative draft of the Environmental Impact Report for a sports complex at White Slough in June or July.

C. COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

- Jane Thurman stated that she is opposed to the Kofu Park location for the Skate Board Park. She indicated that there is a difference between what was originally presented to Council, and what is going to be proposed at a future meeting.
- Donna Phillips commented that deepening Lodi Lake may be helpful toward improving the water quality.

D. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

Susan J. Blackston
City Clerk